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Each member can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members will be careful to write on only one side of the paper and to use black ink.

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FOR PARAGRAPHS UNDER THE WORD "ANS." THE EDITOR IS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE.

January, 1894.

QUESTION CCLXIII.

Is it a fact, as sometimes asserted in print, that everything in Nature is dual, and that nothing can exist or even be conceivable without its opposite? I don't see the necessity for this.

Ans.—Nor need you. It is pure assertion and quite without solid support. Darkness, for instance, does not necessitate the existence of light, for it must have have existed before light was created by the Supreme. During the æons when there was nothing to produce or to manifest light, darkness, and it aloue, was. Nor does light necessitate darkness, for if we imagine a region in space once illuminated and provision made for its perpetually remaining so, there would be no reason for darkness as to it. If we further suppose it peopled with inhabitants, they would never experience darkness, never suspect its existence, never know any condition different from that

they were acquainted with. Goodness, again, does not involve its opposite of badness. If it did, a bad Devil would be as necessary and as eternal as a good God; and yet we all know that evil is a blot upon the universe, a marring due to imperfection in development of knowledge or moral purpose, and hence to pass away when imperfection does. Nobody—nobody of sound religious faith, that is—expects evil to persist forever, to be a permanent defacement and offense, to maintain a never-ending war upon right. On the contrary, we all look upon it as a melancholy incident, not an inevitable constituent, and confidently anticipate the time when it will disappear utterly from the cosmos.

Nor is it the fact that a quality or an object has meaning only by contrast with its antithesis. Contrast heightens the meaning, gives it a stronger background, but does not create it. A good man is one who loves and practises goodness. He appears to more advantage when compared with a bad man, for then his excellence gains greater vividness, but if there was not a bad man on earth his quality would remain the same and receive respect and sympathy. Intelligence would be intelligence just as truly if there was no such thing as stupidity, and similarly with generosity, conscientiousness, and the like.

One must be careful not to push truths to extremes or to run in little grooves of thought. There is very much of duality in Nature, and some of its manifestations are most striking and suggestive, but there does not follow the consequence that *everything* is thus manifested. Some things exist in and by themselves, Hamilton's "relativity of knowledge" having reference to a general limitation of human method of perception, but not necessarily to the mode of existence of the things perceived. "We must discriminate", as the Judge said in "Eighty days around the World".

W.Q.J.—The editor's easy disposal of the question is also pure assertion, it seems to me. I can think of no proposition so easy of proof, and of which there is so much evidence in the material, mental, and psychic realms, as the one that duality rules universally in Nature. The Sun is the day ruler, the

Moon the night ruler; the first giving direct light, the other reflected beams,—in both cases dual. The day is one side, the night the other; and thus light and dark are a duality. In the earth's travel it brings two opposites—heat and cold. Man and animals are male and female—dualities in sex. The word "male" would not connote its present meaning unless there were its opposite. The magnet—a mundane universality—has two opposite poles, one attracting, the other repelling: they are opposite in position as well as in effect. Indeed, it would be tedious to prolong a list that could be extended over the whole range of nature from the little to the great. In the argument used by the Editor that "Intelligence would be intelligence just as truly if there were no such thing as" its opposite, and in other like arguments and illustrations, there is pure assumption. The word "intelligence" describes a quality found among men, but "stupidity" is also to be found there, and one is hardly justified in assuming that a time will come when stupidity will be gone from the cosmos, leaving only intelligence, unless it be also assumed that the complete and exclusive prevalence of intelligence is the known object and end to which the universe is tending. Of course optimistic thought may make this assumption, but pessimism is as much entitled to construct an opposite one and say that stupidity and chaos are the final end and aim. In order to apply the editor's illustration we must grant the possibility underlying his words "if", but no one knows that intelligence is the quality that shall finally prevail above all, and it is allowable to reunite his sentence thus: "Stupidity would be stupidity just as truly if there were no such thing as intelligence".

We are dealing with Nature wherein there is the duality referred to. Every illustration used by the Editor is in itself a duality and understood only through the existence of duality. To assume the destruction of duality is to reduce into a state of nothingness both as to consciousness and the thing cognized. If we take his illustration of evil disappearing and good prevailing, then there must be assumed for the event a cognizer to perceive the good and to feel its effect, which at once makes the final all-embracing duality of a cognizer and the thing cog-

nized, felt, or perceived. If no cognizer is present, but the Universe is simply goodness and naught else, then we have nothingness once more, since there is no mind or consciousness to note it. But as this is not so, we have to conclude that in the final analysis, whether objects be one or many, there must be a perceiver and that which is perceived.

QUESTION CCLXXIV.

Throughout the universe of matter from the lowest form in the mineral kingdom to the highest in the human development, the spectacle is presented of a vast condition of disintegration and disturbance of atomic particles, so that the question arises, What causes all this unevenness of distribution? Why do we see such convulsions of nature as are exhibited in the volcano, the earthquake, and the cyclone? Why is there such an uneven development in the vegetable kingdom? Why should there be in the animal kingdom such disparity in the growth of species, aud why should there be pain and suffering? And in the human kingdom, where shall we find an exception to the operation of some law that creates confusion, sickness, pain, crime, and other evils?

Ans.—There does not seem to be anything mysterious in the fact that there is enormous variety in forms of life through Nature: rather would it be astonishing if types were few and changeless. Remembering the richness of material and the plentitude of force which is to work upon it, an extremely variegated outcome would appear inevitable. The law of "permutation and combination" would alone secure an endless number of atomic groupings. Effects of climate, physical surroundings, transmission of seeds by winds and animals, as well as the deliberate changes by human action, would account for much. As we can hardly imagine that uniformity was designed, and as every further incursion into biology increases the multiformity perceived, it is fair to suppose that change and difference and complexity were the intentional purpose of Nature, *i.e.*, God. So we find the cause in the Divine Will, physical conditions, etc. being the means to accomplishment.

Nor are natural convulsions mysterious. Given an inequality of structural strength with the expansive force of gases or steam, and earthquakes or volcanic outbursts would naturally follow. We need not wonder at explosions on a large scale when we are liable ourselves to produce them on a small scale in our mills and mines.

Nor need we puzzle over unequal development in our different departments of the vegetable and animal worlds. Unless it is assumed—an utterly arbitrary assumption—that all sections should increase in an invariable ratio, there is no reason why there should not be just this inequality. Indeed, there is every reason why there should, new conditions arising and new conditions giving birth to new forms. A cast-iron system would make a sorry earth.

Nor yet is it strange that among men there should be evils physical, mental, and moral. Men would not be men without free-will, and free-will involves the power to choose improper things if such are attractive, and the choice of improper things involves the necessity of suffering because of their impropriety It could hardly be that harmony and disharmony should bring about exactly the same result, the causes being opposed. If right produces happiness, wrong must produce sorrow. Consequently evil acts must of necessity generate evils in character, health, mind, morals, and condition. Karma is very sure.

The difficulty is really in the suffering undergone by animals, inasmuch as moral responsibility is lacking. It is not, indeed, easy to see how entire immunity to animals would be possible in a world where animals feed upon each other and where the men in control of animals cannot all be equally humane; but this consideration does not efface the problem of justice. Probably there is no entirely satisfactory answer to it, for vague talk or the use of mere terms does not meet the case. A mystery seems to exist which in our present state of knowledge must remain such. But there are some thoughts which may help us.

One is that the actual amount of suffering among animals not domesticated is probably far less than is supposed. Some observations recently published indicate this even of the do-

mesticated, but there can hardly be doubt that *feræ naturæ* are measurably free from acute pain. What is true of savages as compared with civilized men seems likely of wild beasts as compared with tamed. Then, too, death is apt to follow severe injury, partly from lack of treatment, partly from the habit of some species to kill a disabled comrade.

Another is that liability to be consumed for food holds as much of the consumer as the consumed. If an animal eats another, it does not seem unfair that he should be eaten in turn. Of course it is true that the instinct to thus eat is implanted by nature, but then it is equally true that that instinct is also implanted in the other animal which makes way with him. Turn-about would seem to be fair play.

Further, the doctrine of the Monad's upward progress through the three kingdoms, however we may interpret it, taken in conjunction with the compensating system common through Nature, may imply that the developing vital-centre (so to speak) with which the Monad allies itself may have retributive good during its later stages for all the ill previously suffered. There is no reason why Karma should not look after animals as fully as after men.

Finally, the case of ill-treated domesticated animals is like that of ill-treated children, *i.e.*, a weak being is subjected to wrong from a strong. This is evidently unavoidable in complicated human affairs, and is not more strange in the one case than in the other. Its existence at all suggests that rectification must be brought about sometime, and if so for children, then for brutes.

Of course these considerations only palliate the mystery: they do not remove it. But have we any right to expect that Nature shall contain no enigmas for us, and that creation shall be as transparent as a crystal?

QUESTION CCLXXV.

How is it that Memory, a purely physical faculty, survives in the purely spiritual Devachanic state? Memory is said to make Devachan supremely blessed by the exercise of its power, and that all we

have loved, thought, and enjoyed will there be subjectively reproduced. But if not by the survival of this physical function, how then?

Ans.—It is not correct to say that memory is a purely physical faculty. If it was so, no being without a body could know anything of his past, or, indeed, be conscious of anything more than the existence of the moment. Not only would all progression through higher states be impossible, but this would be really the highest state, as alone having the condition by which a being would know himself to continue from moment to moment. Memory functions through a physical brain just as the will functions through physical muscles, but it exists apart from and survives it, just as the will exists apart from and survives the muscles when the latter weaken in life or decompose in death. The contrary doctrine is mere materialism.

Nor is it correct to call Devachan a "purely spiritual state". It is, no doubt, a state apart from the body, extra-sensuous, extra-physical; but all states outside of the body are not purely spiritual. What about psychic states, the states of clairvoyance and hypnotism, for instance? Nor yet can the bliss of Devachan be attributed wholly to memory, partly because memory contains as much of sorrow as of joy, but much more because supreme blessedness is never in what we *have* experienced, but in what we *desire* to experience. The Golden Age for any individual is never in the actual past, but in the possible future. Hence, if Devachan merely reproduced even the happiest hours of the last pilgrimage, it would fall very far short of the longings and cravings and aspirations that contained. The ungratified, not the gratified, desires are what men look for in a heaven.

Devachan would seem to be the subjective realization of ideals. But ideals are furnished by the imagination, not by experience. Loves are never perfect, for the loved one has defects: enjoyments are never matchless, for we can always conceive something richer. It is this something, unattained on earth, which Devachan supplies; and Devachan is therefore as much superior to any remembered bliss as an imagined happiness is to any encountered. Hence memory is not its condition, nor experience its basis.

QUESTION CCLXXVI.

Do we begin a new round of embodiments after Pralaya? If the past does not suffice to end the "descent into matter", can we expect the future to do so?

Ans.—This is, of course, a speculative topic. Nobody within reach knows, and the question has anyhow no practical value. Yet as mere speculation one may well doubt any recurrence to material embodiment after this Manvantara ends. All that there may be of teaching and experience in incarnations must have a limit, and it certainly would seem probable that that limit is attained during the inconceivably long period before Pralaya sets in. Indeed, unless *very* slow in our evolution, we shall most likely have exhausted the purposes of incarnation and have reached our goal much in advance of Pralaya, for there are on the road entities as far behind us as others are ahead of us, and the former must have fitting opportunity and help to evolve. If so, we shall in time sustain the relation to them which the latter class do to us now; and if Nirmanakayas or Dhyan Chohans, we should hardly need reïncarnations again, they having completed their work.

Besides, the fact that Creative Wisdom has in this Manvantara manifested itself by means of "matter" does not involve its doing so in another. There may be other methods quite as effective, though we are utterly unable to even imagine their character. Without any "matter" and without any "embodiment" a new form of evolution, if such be needed, might be provided. For the real nature of our ultimate destiny,—if such a word as "ultimate" has any application to a course towards Infinity, is an insoluble mystery, and so must be the conditions to it.

Whatever, if any, may be the character of a post-Pralayic evolution, we may be very sure that it will have no element of pain or sorrow. These things come from conditions which must be overpassed long before that, and which can therefore have no influence in the later state To a form of evolution altogether joyous and satisfactory no one need have objection. The thought of material embodiments for even so long as they

are necessitated is somewhat disheartening: it would be appalling if protracted through later Manvantaras. But no such thought is required by probability; quite the opposite. And so we may well dismiss all anxiety of that kind, feeling abundantly sure that the disciplinary function of incarnations has been so wisely adjusted that it will be fully accomplished during the present era, and that it and its accompanying pains and griefs and forebodings will then vanish entirely and forever.

W. Q. J.—One of the cardinal principles of Theosophy is that evolution by means of manifestation is periodical, one *manvantara* succeeding the preceding one as its logical and natural successor. Hence the present one is the legitimate successor of that which preceded it, is its resultant in every way, but necessarily higher since there can be no going back. It is postulated in the *Secret Doctrine* that the descent into matter changes into the reäscent to spirit in this present round. Those of the race who shall not succeed before Pralaya comes on in attaining to truth will necessarily have to go through whatever reëmbodiment is needed in the succeeding manvantara. This is natural, just, and reasonable. Those who attain in the vast stretch of centuries yet before us to the height of power, wisdom, and perfection will not have to go through reëmbodiment unless they wish to do so: it is quite likely that a great many of them will, out of love for the new and struggling ones of that future *manvantara*, descend into matter for the help and benefit of those below them. Perhaps by that time, so many millions of years hence, the questioner will have developed so much through struggle and effort as to be quite undismayed by the prospect of another fight with matter then. But certainly now it is looking a long way ahead, seeking for a fanciful idea to dwell on this future possibility in a manvantara which is for us inconceivable in time as well as in quality.

QUESTION CCLXXVII.

Are those who predict that the United States are to be the theatre of Black Magic in time to come able to foresee what will be the cata-

strophe? Will our race be left to itself until it shall work out its own destruction by a cataclysm, like the Atlanteans; or will an Avatar appear at the crisis, as Krishna did in the days of Kansa? Is there any record or tradition of an Avatar's having appeared among the Atlanteans previous to their final extinction?

W. Q. J.—If the Adepts have predicted that the United States will be the scene for a catastrophe of Black Magic, they certainly are able to know what that catastrophe will be. The question does not seem to me profitable, but rather one of those arising more from curiosity, quite natural but still not valuable. It is doubtless true that at important epochs in the World's history under the law of cycles and Karma great beings appear for the confusion of the wicked and the re-establishment of virtue. We have no information as to the appearance of such beings amongst the Atlanteans, as nearly all we have heard about that race is in the *Secret Doctrine*, and there it merely says that such beings have appeared periodically; hence they must have come to the Atlanteans.

QUESTION CCLXXVIII.

We have been told a great deal about the loss of the soul, but I do not remember any clear explanation of what becomes of the Upper Triad after the division between the Upper and the Lower Ego becomes permanent. Some hold that the Higher Trinity loses the result of the experience of the entire Manvantara and has to begin all over again at the beginning of the next Manvantara. Others hold that it is only the experience of the life current at the time of the separation that is lost to the Higher Trinity, and that Manas picks up the thread of rebirth just as it was at the birth of the lost personality and continues the evolutionary procession, merely losing the fruits of one personality. Which view is correct?

K. H.—I should say undoubtedly the latter. The Higher Triad, or Atma-Buddhi-Manas, which we may call roughly, for convenience' sake, the *individual* and spiritual man, persists throughout the Manvantara, and in fact reëmerges as individual consciousness in a new cycle. But the lower Manas, or the

personality, that is, each new *mortal* existence, must link itself to the immortal by a chain of spiritual aspirations which shall bind it so firmly to the Higher Ego that it cannot be dissevered from it, but takes its place as one pearl upon the golden thread. If, on the contrary, that personality ignores the spiritual element and attaches itself exclusively to the material side of life, still more if it is steeped in vice, it loses its connection with the immortal Ego, there is nothing in it to partake of a higher life, and therefore that bead drops off the string, the necklace —if we may so speak of the golden thread upon which are strung all lives—remaining none the less intact (save for the loss of that one pearl) and ready to take up the next bead when the Ego comes again into incarnation. Meantime, of course, the spiritual consciousness (the Higher Triad) lives upon its own plane, unaffected by the changes that take place upon the lower planes (*vide Key to Theosophy*, pp. 103, 165-170).

J. H. Fussell.—It will be as well first to state what is meant by the loss of the Soul. When the life of a person has been so evil that there has been no aspiration towards the Higher Ego or Higher Manas, the link which binds the Higher Manas to the Lower (its reflection) is broken, and the Personality is then cut off from the Higher Nature or Soul and is said to have lost its Soul. The Personality thus severed from all connection with the Divine Part of Man is sometimes called a *lost soul* (soul here being used in the personal sense in distinction to the individual Soul, or Higher Ego).

After permanent separation has taken place, one of two courses is open to the Higher Ego (I use the term Ego instead of Triad, because the power of choice belongs to the Higher Manas). (*a*) It may return to its own plane with the experience it has gathered through those personal existences which were not lost to it. Or (*b*) it may commence a new series of incarnations on earth. In the first case, not having reaped the experience of the whole manvantara, it will necessarily have to go through a series of incarnations in a succeeding manvantara —according to the teaching that the evolution of the incarnating Kumara is not yet complete so far as experience of earth-life is concerned.

In the second case, the Ego on reïncarnating will pick up the thread of experience at the point before the last preceding (and now lost) personal existence. But this will not be without danger; for the "lost soul" will be attracted to the new personality and endeavor to obsess it and thus become a Dweller on the Threshold. An illustration of a new incarnation being in peril from the lost personality may be seen in the *Story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* The experiences of the previous incarnations are not lost to the Ego, as may be seen from two considerations: *(a)* The conservation of energy, physical, moral, and spiritual. At the end of each earth-life the Ego absorbs all the high aspirations and noble thoughts of the personal existence, and these are transmuted in Devachan into character. This, having become part of the Ego, cannot be lost to it. *(b)* It follows from the above that though one personality may be lost the new incarnation must largely be the result of all the preceeding incarnations and will probably bear a great resemblance to the lost personality: hence the strong attraction between it and the "Dweller".

It follows, then, that losing an incarnation or personality is analogous to losing a day out of one life. If I sleep all through one day and wake up the day after, my character is not changed thereby nor have I lost the experience of previous days. What is lost is the opportunity for progress that that day would have afforded; and the knowledge of such lost opportunity, or even if there is no knowledge, the new conditions which have not been kept pace with and some of which have been lost may be to a small degree analogous to the Dweller on the Threshold. Nor if I were *not* to wake again after my day's sleep, would the experience of my previous life be lost: I should bring back the fruits of it to my next earth-life. This, however, is merely by way of illustration and must not be carried too far, but it serves to show that the entire experience of the *successful* personalities is not lost in either of the above possible cases.

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